

A statement in support of Anne-Marie Brady from academics at University of Canterbury

Wednesday 28/11/18

As colleagues of Professor Anne-Marie Brady, we welcome the statement by the Prime Minister that "I absolutely defend the right of academics to utilise their academic freedom and, of course, the rights that are granted to them through our legislation. I absolutely support that and defend that.

"They should continue to be able to do their work, and with freedom from repercussion from this Government or any other Government."

We join in supporting the Open Letter on Academic Freedom of November 26 2018 that called on the New Zealand Government to be transparent in any outcomes of the investigation regarding the case of Professor Brady.

Furthermore, we wish to clearly state our collegial support for Professor Brady and reiterate that academic freedom is central to the workings of our university – as it is to all universities in New Zealand.

We take very seriously the news reports that Professor Brady has been repeatedly burgled and had her car tampered with because of her academic work regarding the influence campaigns of the People's Republic of China. Professor Brady is a specialist on Chinese domestic and foreign policy, as well as polar and Pacific politics

We also support Professor Brady's continued requests for police protection for herself and her family. Academic freedom means no individual or their family should be placed in danger because of their research.

We note that it is often easier not to speak out in the name of academic freedom even though the Education Act (1989) declares that Universities are legally obligated to act as the "conscience and critic of society". Yet any legislation in support of academic freedom requires the ongoing support of Government, universities and academics to ensure that academic freedom is not only stated, but that it is rigorously and publicly defended. This means that academics must be prepared to speak out publicly when attempts are made by any nation, group or individual, to seek to limit or influence that obligation.

We sign this statement because we do not wish to be seen in any way as condoning attempts to limit academic freedom, whether in the case of Professor Brady or any other situations that may arise in the future.

Therefore we wish to clearly and unequivocally state that as academics at University of Canterbury we totally reject any attempt by any government, institution, corporation or pressure group to influence or curb academic freedom.

Signatories:

Associate Professor Mike Grimshaw (Sociology & Anthropology)

Professor Steve Ratuva (Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies)

Dr Joana Kuntz (Psychology)

Professor Ursula Cheer (Law)

Professor LindaJean Kenix (Head of School, Languages, Social and Political Sciences)

Professor Euan Mason (Forestry)

Dr Chris Jones (History)

Dr Michael-John Turp (Philosophy)

Dr Tiina Vares (Sociology & Anthropology)

Professor Kate van Heugten (Head of Department, Social Work & Human Services)

Dr Piers Locke (Sociology & Anthropology)

Associate Professor Annie Potts (Cultural Studies)

Associate Professor Lyndon Fraser (Head of Department, Sociology & Anthropology)

Associate Professor Kathleen Liberty (Health Sciences)

Dr Philip Gunby (Economics)

Dr Antonio Viselli (French)

Professor Greg Newbold (Sociology & Anthropology)

Associate Professor Peter Field (History)

Dr Erin Harrington (English & Cultural Studies)

Associate Professor Ekant Veer (Marketing)

Dr Nicholas Wright (English)

Dr Cindy Zeiher (Social Work & Human Services)

Garrick Cooper (Aotahi-School of Maori & Indigenous Studies)

Associate Professor Annelies Kamp (Head of School, Educational Studies & Leadership)

Professor John Hopkins (Law)

Associate Professor Ruth McManus (Sociology & Anthropology)

Professor Philip Schluter (Health Sciences)

Professor Philip Armstrong (English)

Dr Christina Stachurski (English)

Associate Professor Patrick O'Sullivan (Classics)

Professor Annick Masselot (Law)

Dr Alison Loveridge (Sociology & Anthropology)

Associate Professor Kathleen Quinlivan (School of Educational Studies & Leadership)

Associate Professor Donald Matheson (Head of Department, Media & Communications)

Professor Jack Copeland (Philosophy)

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